



Administrative Policies and Procedures: 11.4

Subject:	Family Functional Assessment Process
Authority:	TCA 37-5-105; 37-5-106
Standards:	DCS Practice Model Standards - 2-105B; 2-109B; 2-110B; 5-201; 5-204; 6-400; 6-507B; 6-508B; 6-513C; 8-101; 8-206B; 10-101; 11-101; 11-103; 11-302A; 11-307A; 11-310B; 11-315B; COA – AS-2; CM-3; CPS-7; FC-2; GLS-3; KC-2; RTX-3; YIL-4
Application:	To All Department of Children's Services Employees, CPS Case Workers, Family Service Workers, and Court Liaisons

Policy Statement:

The Department of Children's Services will use the Family **Functional Assessment** (FFA) process to engage children and families in a professional helping relationship to identify strengths and underlying needs and to build the child and family team. Any DCS **Family Service Worker (FSW)** who has initial contact with a family will initiate the Functional Assessment process. Documentation of the FFA process will be on-going according to program requirements will be documented in the FFA Web Application.

Purpose:

The Family Functional Assessment is an assessment tool designed to help guide the FSW in gathering information on the past, present and future of a family by continuously evaluating the family's strengths and underlying needs, concerns and challenges and to build supportive teams with children and families which will last beyond agency involvement; and lastly, lead to the development of individualized plans utilizing family strengths and solutions.

Procedures:

A. Use of the Documentation of Family Functional Assessment Process Manual	The Documentation of Family Functional Assessment Process Manual will aid the FSW in the assessment of the child and family. The Director of Family Functional Assessment will develop, maintain and revise the manual annually or as often as necessary.
B. Assessment process	1. Gathering Information a) Information can be obtained through the use of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Interviews,♦ Observations,♦ Records checks,♦ Collateral reports,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Evaluations, ◆ Pictorial tools, ◆ Photographs, ◆ DCS assessment tools, and ◆ Other appropriate evidence-based tools. <p>b) DCS staff shall interact with families and children in a strengths-based, culturally responsive manner using culturally competent, interpersonal skills demonstrating genuineness, empathy, and respect for the family and individuals in accordance with DCS policy 31.7, Engaging Families.</p> <p>c) When interviewing members of the child and family team, it is important for the FSW to “hear the family story” through the process of engagement. Interviews with family members should be driven by the information that the person has to offer and should not be driven by questions on a questionnaire. Interviews will seek the underlying issues that result in surface behaviors or problems.</p> <p>2. Analyzing Information</p> <p>a) Information will be analyzed by identifying signs of safety (strengths) and signs of risk (needs and concerns).</p> <p>b) FSW will ask the family to identify strengths and underlying needs.</p> <p>c) During case conferences, supervisors should assist FSW's with further analysis of information.</p> <p>3. Drawing Conclusions and Making Decisions</p> <p>a) Conclusions and decisions about family strengths, needs, and service delivery are made in conjunction with the child and family team.</p> <p>b) Families who have been working with their FSW through the functional assessment process are ready to actively participate in the child and family team meetings to determine solutions toward creating that change.</p>
C. Use of the Family Functional Assessment Field Guide	<p>1. The <i>Family Functional Assessment Field Guide</i> is a preparation tool that FSW's can use to identify questions for interviewing families. However, interviews should not be exclusive to questions from the Field Guide.</p> <p>2. Interviews with family members will be conducted face-to-face when possible. Phone interviews can be used when face-to-face interviews are not possible, however, efforts must be made to meet with the family <u>face-to-face</u> before the decision to conduct a phone interview.</p> <p>3. The Director of Family Functional Assessment will develop, maintain and revise the field guide annually or as often as necessary.</p>
D. Initiating the FFA	The DCS employee who has first contact with the family will initiate the FFA process and documentation. This will include FSWs who work with families

	through the FSS/FCIP programs.
E. Supervisor review	Team Leaders will conduct a quality review of FFAs as part of the quarterly case file audit. The focus of the review will include the timely initiation of the document, accuracy, and content. The purpose of the review will be to promote high-quality assessments and timely and appropriate updates.
F. Maintaining and updating the on-going FFA	<p>FSWs are responsible for updating the FFA so that at any point in time it will give a clear representation of the family's current functioning. Documentation into the FFA Web Application must occur within five (5) business days of child coming into custody. The FFA will be updated as outlined below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Any time new information is obtained or prior to a Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM); or 2. Minimally, on a quarterly basis; or 3. Prior to case closure.
G. FFA and the family's re-involvement with DCS	When a family re-enters for the services of DCS after a previous case of any kind has been closed, the already existing FFA will be resumed. <u>At no time will a new</u> FFA document be initiated. The family should be thoroughly re-interviewed to verify old information and gather new information. New information regarding family strengths and needs are added to the functional assessment to continue the comprehensive case assessment
H. CPS transfer to FSW or case closure	CPS investigators will initiate a FFA within five (5) days of the date of transfer to the FSW or prior to case closing; however, the FFA is not a requirement for transfer to the FSW. If a CPS referral is assigned through the MRS Assessment Track, the CPS Family Assessment Worker will initiate the FFA.
I. Custody cases	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If a child enters custody through the Courts or voluntary placement and does not have a previously initiated FFA, the Court Liaison will initiate the FFA. For regions that do not have a Court Liaison, the FSW will initiate the FFA. 2. If the case has had prior FFA documentation, the FSW will use previously gathered assessment information as a starting point for continuing the on-going FFA process. 3. FFA documentation for families with children in DCS custody will be thoroughly documented by the FSW prior to the Permanency Plan Child and Family Team Meeting.
J. Probation cases	Juvenile Justice employees will initiate the FFA on children/youth who first come to the attention of DCS on <u>probation</u> . FFA information for children/youth on probation will be thoroughly documented within twenty (20) working days in preparation for the development of the Individual Program Plan (IPP) with the child and family.

K. Use of pictorial tools	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Pictorial tools include:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Genogram;b) Timeline;c) Family map, andd) Ecomap2. Pictorial Tools assist the FSW in conducting a family-centered, strengths-based, culturally-inclusive assessment. These tools offer visual representations of how families view themselves and the outside world, and help useful families see their strengths and needs.3. All FSW's will use at least one pictorial tool during the assessment process. A copy of the pictorial tool will be given to the family, maintained in the case file, and documented in the Functional Assessment.
Forms:	None
Collateral documents:	<u>Documentation of the Family Functional Assessment Process Manual</u> <u>Family Functional Assessment Field Guide</u> <i>Functional Assessment Web Application</i>